

Appendix E. Policy Review

Introduction

Creating an urban environment that is conducive to safe cycling for both recreation and daily transportation requires thoughtful planning and decision-making at many different levels. Although bicycle use is a transportation function with DDOT serving as the lead agency, other District departments and other agencies outside District government have a role to play.

The District of Columbia government maintains a number of policy documents, municipal regulations, guidelines, and coordination activities between District agencies and with other jurisdictions that collectively have a substantial impact on the facilities and environment for bicycling in the District. This policy review for the District's Bicycle Master Plan includes the following policies, regulations, guidelines and activities:

- Comprehensive Plan (DCMR Title 10 - rev. 12/98)
- Zoning (DCMR Title 11 rev. - 2/03)
- Traffic & Parking (DCMR Title 18 rev. - 3/97)
- Public Space & Safety (DCMR Title 24 rev. 12/96)
- DDOT Design & Engineering Guidelines (Draft 4/03)
 - DC Long Range Transportation Plan
 - Policy Coordination With Other Agencies/Jurisdictions

Each of these areas is addressed in the following section starting with purpose and relationship to bicycle facilities and use, followed by a set of recommended changes to enhance conditions for bicycling.

DCMR Title 10: Comprehensive Plan

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

The District's Comprehensive Plan establishes the policy framework that guides public sector decision-making on the part of the District government and federal agencies in the development and regulation of the District's environment. This document was last amended in February 1999. The current document is organized into 15 chapters as listed below:

- Chapter 1 - General Provisions Element
- Chapter 2 - Economic Development Element
- Chapter 3 - Housing Element
- Chapter 4 - Environmental Protection Element
- Chapter 5 - Transportation Element
- Chapter 6 - Public Facilities Element
- Chapter 7 - Urban Design Element
- Chapter 8 - Preservation and Historic Features Element
- Chapter 9 - Downtown Plan Element
- Chapter 10 - Human Services Element

- Chapter 11 - Land Use Element
- Chapter 12/- Ward Plans
- Chapter 19

Many of these chapters have a bearing on transportation facilities and use. A strategy for transportation should be a major feature of Chapter 1, the General Provision Element, since it underpins many of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Transportation is specifically referenced in Chapter 5, the Transportation Element, Chapter 9, the Downtown Plan Element, and Chapters 11 through 19, the Ward Plan Elements.

The current document is limited in its guidance and support for non-motorized modes of travel. At present, the District's Office of Planning is leading a process to revise and update the Comprehensive Plan. It should be noted that this review and update could lead to a significant restructuring of the Comprehensive Plan. This process offers an opportunity to strengthen the Comprehensive Plan with regard to intermodal and multimodal transportation with an emphasis on the importance of non-motorized forms of transportation.

Recommended Changes

The District of Columbia is a truly multi-modal urban environment where all modes of transportation can and do play a role. The District ranks in the top tier of cities with regard to use of public transit and walking, but has lagged substantially behind other cities with regard to policies and investments that promote non-motorized transportation.

Chapter 1 - General Provisions Element

Add a provision that calls for the development and management of a balanced transportation system that provides safe, attractive and convenient access for all modes of travel with an emphasis on walking, biking and transit.

Chapter 4 - Environmental Protection Element

Under the Air Quality section, add language that promotes the use of non-motorized transportation as an integral part of plans and programs to reduce mobile source emissions. The Greater Washington Region has been designated "Severe Non-Attainment" under the provisions of the Clean Air Act.

Chapter 5 - Transportation Element

Revise this chapter to strengthen multi-modal and intermodal transportation provisions. Create new sections to address pedestrian and bicycle policies and facilities.

Chapter 6 - Public Facilities Element

Add text that supports the provision of multimodal access for all public facilities. This section should also establish planning requirements for the development and implementation of multi-modal transportation plans for all public facilities.

Chapter 9 - Downtown Element

Apply the same approach as in Chapter 5, but with far greater focus on the importance of balanced transportation facilities and systems management to the long-term health of the region's core. This section should also cover the transportation relationship between the core and adjacent neighborhoods.

Chapter 12 to 18 - Ward Elements

These sections should be revised to address the importance of non-motorized travel within the wards, to other destinations in the District, and surrounding jurisdictions. These sections should also address the specific facility needs within the wards.

DCMR Title 11: Zoning Ordinance

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

The Zoning Ordinance regulates the development of land in the District of Columbia and establishes off-street parking requirements for development under the following sections.

- Chapter 21 - Off-Street Parking Requirements
- Chapter 23 - Garages & Parking Lots
- Chapter 24 - Planned Unit Development Procedures

To the extent that off-street bicycle requirements exist in the District's municipal regulations, it is in DCMR Title 11. The District of Columbia Department of Zoning is the government staff department responsible for zoning, and the 5-member Zoning Commission is responsible for review and approval of amendments to the Ordinance. The following section covers the existing bicycle parking requirements included in the Zoning Ordinance.

Chapter 21 - Off-Street Parking Requirements:

This section of the zoning ordinance establishes minimum provisions for off-street vehicle and bicycle parking. It also establishes the size, location, access, maintenance and operation of those required spaces. Section 2119 - bicycle Parking Spaces, specifically requires the following:

2119.1 "Bicycle parking spaces shall be provided for office, retail and service uses, except for retail and service uses in the C-3-C, C-4, and C-5 (PAD) Districts. For office uses in the C-4 and C-5 (PAD) Districts, bicycle parking spaces shall be provided as if the building or structure were located in a C-3-C District.

2.119.2 "The number of bicycle parking spaces provided shall be at least equal to five percent (5%) of the number of automobile spaces required under 2101.1.

For general office uses in the C-3-C District (the bicycle parking requirement, which applies to C-4 and C-5), is very modest due to the linkage with vehicle parking. The minimum vehicle-parking requirement

for this District is 1 space for every 1,800 SF above the first 2,000 SF. Thus the bicycle-parking requirement works out to be one space for every 36,000 square feet of office development or one space for every 120 employees (assuming 300 SF per employee).

The current bicycle parking requirements also do not cover multi-family residential development in the District and it is unclear how university and medical campuses/facilities are treated in this ordinance.

Chapter 23 - Garages, Carports, Parking Lots and Gasoline Service Stations

This section of the zoning ordinance regulates both parking garages and parking lots that may be developed as either an ancillary or primary use. There is currently no specified bicycle-parking requirement in this section.

Chapter 24 - Planned Unit Development Procedures

The planned unit development (PUD) process is intended to encourage high quality developments in return for public benefits. The goal is to permit flexibility of development and other incentives such as increased building height and density, provided that the project offers a commendable number of public benefits and advances public health, safety and welfare. Section 2405.7 refers back to Chapter 21 for off-street parking requirements but states that the Zoning Commission may reduce or increase the parking requirement of such facilities depending on the uses and the location of the project.

Recommended Changes to the Zoning Ordinance

The existing requirements for bicycle parking in the Zoning Ordinance are limited in scope and will only yield a modest amount of off-street bicycle parking in the future. Multi-family residential development is not addressed in the ordinance and the ordinance is ambiguous as to whether university campuses and medical campuses are covered by the existing requirements. The intent of bicycle parking requirements is to provide cyclists with convenient and safe bicycle parking at a range of potential trip origins and destinations, the same approach that is taken for vehicle parking. Cyclists, like motorists, need convenient secure short-term parking for some service trips, while also needing secure, weather-protected locations for longer-term bicycle parking at home and at work.

As part of this assessment, the zoning ordinances and bicycle parking requirements of 11 jurisdictions around the country were reviewed. The jurisdictions that were selected for this review are at or near the center of a metropolitan area, are highly urbanized, and have implemented supportive bicycle plans, policies or programs over the last five-year period. These jurisdictions include the following:

- San Diego, California
- San Francisco, California
- Portland, Oregon
- Seattle, Washington
- Vancouver, British Columbia
- Boulder, Colorado
- Madison, Wisconsin
- Chicago, Illinois
- New York City, New York

- Boston, Massachusetts
- Cambridge, Massachusetts

These jurisdictions have diverse approaches to off-street bicycle parking requirements. These approaches ranged from a comprehensive requirement for bicycle parking for all uses (treating bicycle-parking requirements like minimum vehicle parking requirements). The Cities of San Diego, CA, Portland, OR and Vancouver, BC, fall into this category. In the case of Portland and Vancouver, these codes went further to specify different types of required bicycle parking. In Portland, this differentiation was made between short and long term spaces. Vancouver was similar but organized requirements based on level of security provided. Most of the jurisdictions reviewed have more modest requirements for a set of specified uses such as commercial office and/or multi-family residential. And finally, several jurisdictions such as Chicago and Boston have not yet adopted off-street bicycle parking requirements in their ordinances although recently developed bicycle master plans call for this.

Based on a review of the District's existing requirements as described in the Zoning Ordinance and the requirements of other cities, substantial revisions are required to promote conditions that are supportive of bicycle use District-wide. As stated at the beginning of this section, the intent of policies that require bicycle parking for a variety of developments is to make bicycle parking and use convenient for a range of trip purposes and for a wide range of origins and destinations. As such, the comprehensive approach to bicycle parking facility requirements that has been employed in the cities of San Diego, Portland, and Vancouver is recommended. Further, the approach of requiring two tiers of bicycle parking (both short and long term spaces) as in Portland and Vancouver is also recommended.

Second, it is recommended that bicycle-parking requirements be de-coupled from vehicle parking requirements and be described in a separate table. The District's minimum vehicle parking requirements are generally very modest and can be reduced further through the PUD process or through other provisions of the Zoning Ordinance listed in 2103 - Exceptions to the Schedule of Requirements. One example from this section applies to developments within 800 feet of a Metrorail Station where the parking requirement can be reduced by 25 percent.

Third, the proposed revisions should be linked to District transportation goals and a policy direction that supports bicycling as an essential mode of transportation that can accommodate a significant percentage of daily person trips. In Portland, the city's goal is for 10 percent of all daily person- trips to be made by bicycle. This policy objective is stated at the beginning of the bicycle requirements section of Portland's municipal regulations (the equivalent of the District's Zoning Ordinance).

The City of Portland's municipal regulations pertaining to bicycle parking, "Title 33: Planning and Zoning, Section 33.266.200," and the City of Vancouver's Development Bylaws, "Section 6 - Off-street Bicycle Space Regulations," are included as an attachment to this memorandum for your review.

DCMR Title 18: Traffic & Parking

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

The purpose of this title is to regulate the use of the surface transportation system, focusing predominantly on drivers and motor vehicles. Use of bicycles and issues related to pedestrian movement are covered in this document. This title also establishes enforcement provisions.

The specific sections that are relevant to cycling are the following:

- Chapter 1 - Issuance of driver's license
- Chapter 12 - Bicycle use, registration and parking
- Chapter 22 - Moving violations
- Chapter 26 - Bicycle use infractions
- Chapter 40 - Traffic signs & restrictions at specific locations

Recommended Changes

Chapter 1 - Issuance of Driver's Licenses

Review driver testing requirements to assure that it reflects safe motor vehicle operations in an urban multi-modal environment with cyclists, pedestrians and transit vehicles.

Chapter 12 - Bicycles, Motorized Bicycles, and Miscellaneous Vehicles

This section lays out the regulations for lawful bicycle use, mandatory bicycle registration, bicycle safety equipment, installation of bicycle racks on public space, bicycle parking on public space, etc. This section is clearly written and no significant revisions are recommended at this time.

Chapter 21 - Traffic Signs, Signals, Symbols, and Devices

In Chapter 12, in 1200.3, it states that "operators of bicycles have the same rights as operators of motor vehicles." However, most of the interaction and potential conflicts between motor vehicles and cyclists occur at intersections. There is no mention of cyclists in this chapter. This section should be reviewed to clarify cyclist rights at controlled intersections particularly with regard to turning vehicles.

Chapter 22 - Moving Violations

This section needs to be strengthened regarding the rights of pedestrians and cyclists in the public right-of-way. As the most vulnerable users of the surface transportation system, these users should be afforded the maximum degree of protection by the regulations that govern right-of-way use. At present, most collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists with motor vehicles are assumed to be the fault of the pedestrians and cyclists unless there is conclusive proof to the contrary.

This section also establishes motor vehicle speed restrictions and the proper use of the roadway. Motor vehicle speeds have a tremendous impact on the safety and comfort of cyclists using public streets. Vehicle travel speeds of 25 mph or less are most conducive to safe cycling.

Chapter 40 - Traffic Signs and Restrictions at Specific Locations

Temporary vehicle parking/double parking on bicycle routes and in designated bicycle lanes creates a serious hazard for cyclists. Section 4033 specifically references a prohibition of motor vehicle use of bicycle lanes. This section needs to be clarified to prohibit temporary vehicle parking and loading in established bicycle lanes. There should also be set fines for this infraction to discourage this activity.

DCMR Title 24: Open Space & Safety

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

This title regulates the use of public space in the District and establishes streetscape standards. While bicycle parking on the public right-of-way is covered under Title 18 Vehicles and Traffic, there is no discussion of bicycle parking in this Title. The provision of well-designed short-term visible and accessible bicycle parking in the public right-of-way is important for encouraging bicycle use and should be thought of in the same way as short-term curbside vehicle parking.

Recommended Changes

Insert a section in Title 24 that specifically addresses bicycle parking as a legitimate use in the public right-of-way, consistent with Title 18, and incorporate appropriate bicycle rack designs in the streetscape standards for Downtown and other districts.

DDOT Design & Engineering Manual

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

The District's Department of Transportation (DDOT) Office Manual for Design and Engineering documents procedures that will enable DDOT staff, consultants, and private interests to develop projects that meet the District's policies and standards. Aspects of this manual that are relevant to bicycle facility and use include the following:

- Establishes procedures for transportation capital project management and guidelines for facility design
- Provides guidance for traffic management/maintenance
- Provides guidelines for pavement markings and signage
- Establishes requirements for traffic impact studies
- Provides guidelines for on-street parking
- Relies heavily on established industry standards and guidelines

The most recent draft of this manual reviewed for this study was issued 04/14/03. To date, this manual has not been formally adopted by the Department.

Recommended Changes

The recommended changes to this document are intended to address the fact that the District is a highly urbanized multi-modal environment where many different transportation system users need safe and convenient access to transportation facilities and services. As such, these standards should be aligned.

Chapter 3 - Project Management Checklist

3.2 Project Scoping - This section needs to emphasize up-front multimodal planning and coordination. Important objectives to guide projects going through the scoping process include the provision of multimodal access and balance, promoting safety for all users, and supporting the lawful use of transportation facilities.

Chapter 5 - Traffic

Add a section that includes the objectives stated above. Emphasize steps needed to protect the most vulnerable users - pedestrians and cyclists.

Chapter 30 - Roadway

Review the functional classification system for its appropriateness in an urban multi-modal context (30.4). Revise design speed for urban streets to equal posted speeds (30.5). Review standard roadway element widths (30.11).

Chapter 43 - Guidelines for Pavement Markings & Signage

Consider inclusion of a provision of bicycle boxes at intersections, use of yield triangles at intersections, color differentiation of bike facilities on major commercial streets.

Chapter 44 - Guidelines for Reviewing Traffic Conditions & Preparing Traffic Impact Studies

This section should focus on person travel by all modes and should address the issue of traffic speed and safety for all users.

Chapter 45 - Requirements for Traffic Impact Studies for Development Projects

Same note as in Chapter 44.

Chapter 46 - Parking (Table 46a)

Consider adding the option for a 7'-0" parking stall width.

District Long Range Transportation Plan

Purpose & Relationship to Bicycle Facilities & Use

The District developed its first State Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) in 1996. For the purpose of federal transportation funding programs, the District of Columbia is treated as a state. The creation of an LRTP is a planning requirement of the federal surface transportation legislation. The 1996 plan was noteworthy for its scenario-based planning approach. The plan is relevant to the Bicycle Master Plan

because the LRTP is intended to serve as a guiding document for the development, evaluation, selection and implementation of transportation projects in the District. The Transportation Strategy described in this plan included the following elements:

- 1. Develop sufficient and consistent funding to sustain world-class infrastructure and an exemplary multi-modal transportation project planning and institutional coordination process. This will be accomplished by creating new revenue opportunities and innovative financing techniques.*
- 2. Improve the efficiency, safety and attractiveness of the existing transportation system through improved maintenance, streetscaping and signage*
- 3. Focus transit investment on internal circulation to provide City residents and visitors with improved alternatives to the automobile.*
- 4. Reduce the impacts of suburb to City travel on District residents by intercepting automotive traffic at key locations and providing excellent alternatives to driving in the City.*
- 5. Promote business in the District by addressing goods movement through improved loading facilities and by improving rail as an alternative to moving goods into and out of the City.*
- 6. Develop non-traditional, "signature" transportation for the District, including a water-taxi system, light rail and a world class bicycle transportation network.*

The development of a viable bicycle facility network is explicitly supported in the last strategy element. However, other strategy elements also support improvements in cycling conditions. Strategy 1 calls for multi-modal transportation planning. Strategy 2 calls for improved maintenance. Strategy 4 recommends the provision of viable alternatives to traveling by auto within the District.

The Action Plan calls for the development of District-wide "bicycle spine network," to connect existing, dedicated bicycle paths with one another and with new paths and dedicated bicycle lanes. The detailed recommendations for this area are included under Action Item 7.17 - Bicycle Spine Network.

The District's LRTP is currently being updated. This provides an opportunity to update and expand upon the recommendations for bicycle facilities and policies.

Recommended Changes

A preferred bicycle route network and design standards are being developed as part of the Bicycle Master Plan. This work should be integrated into the LRTP. One of the main challenges presented in the LRTP update is providing the right balance of access and use by all modes (auto/truck, transit, walking and cycling) on major transportation corridors. Some corridors may be best suited for intensive transit use while others may be highly suitable for bicycle facilities. This analysis must be done within a context where the boundaries of public right-of-way are fixed.

A goal for the bicycle element of the LRTP is to identify a network of bicycle facilities and routes that provide reasonably direct and safe access to most of the desired destinations in the District. A second goal

would be to pursue the incorporation of reasonable bicycle and pedestrian accommodation in all new or substantially reconstructed segments of the District's street network as part of the routine project planning and development process.

Policy Coordination with Other Agencies

District Schools (public and private)

There are over 50,000 students that attend DC Public Schools and many more that attend the District's many private schools. Encouraging bicycle and pedestrian access to schools is good public policy from many vantage points: promotes physical activity among students, has no adverse environmental impacts, and requires only modest expenditures in pedestrian and bicycle facilities (compared to adding new road and/or transit capacity).

DC Public Schools has a written policy on the provision of reduced fare bus tokens and Metrorail passes for access to school but has no comparable written policies for non-motorized (bicycle and pedestrian) access to schools. However, individual schools have been found to discourage student bicycle use by prohibiting bicycle parking on school grounds or not providing secure bicycle parking facilities (due to concerns about liability).

DDOT staff should work with the DC Public Schools and other private schools to develop policies that are supportive of multi-modal access, and that encourage walking and bicycling.

Metropolitan Police Department

Promoting lawful use of public streets and sidewalks by all users is very important to providing an environment that is conducive to safe cycling. Cars and trucks, if driven with disregard for motor vehicle laws, are a serious hazard to others, particularly pedestrians and cyclists that do not have the protection of the vehicle with its many safety features. If the District is serious about promoting non-motorized travel, a minimal tolerance for motorist infractions is required, and travel speeds of 25 mph or under would need to be standard. The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is responsible for enforcing existing traffic laws. Improved communication and coordination between the MPD and DDOT will be required if progress is to be made in this area. It will also require staffing and financial resources.

Supporting education programs that promote shared use of the right-of-way is also important to promote safe cycling conditions.

WMATA

Substantial advances in bike access to transit have been implemented in the last five years. Bicycles are now permitted on Metrorail throughout the system outside of the peak hours of operation. Further, a majority of Metrobus's fleet has now been outfitted with bicycle racks. These actions have greatly expanded the range of cyclists in the region.

More work is required on the provision of visible, secure and user friendly long-term bicycle parking at Metrorail Stations.

Providing safe bicycle access from surrounding neighborhoods to the station entrance is also needed. Many Metrorail Stations, particularly on the east side of the District are dominated by auto and bus drop-off and parking areas with limited accommodation for pedestrians and cyclists.

National Park Service

The National Park Service has jurisdiction over much of the District's public open space system, particularly in the Monumental Core and along the river corridors. Much of the District's existing and proposed trail network is on NPS controlled land. As such, any plan for enhanced bicycle facilities and use will require ongoing coordination with the National Park Service.

Architect of the Capitol

A Similar coordination as discussed above is required between DDOT and the Architect of the Capitol regarding bicycle facilities and signage that fall within the Capitol grounds.

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) & the General Services Administration (GSA)

NCPC is responsible for establishing planning guidelines for federal facilities in the District, including policies governing off-street parking for vehicles and bicycles. The DC Zoning Ordinance does not apply to federally owned facilities. GSA is the umbrella property manager for the federal government and sets the requirements for federal facilities in the District and numerous other locations. Incorporating bicycle parking and other bicycle supportive facilities will require coordination with both NCPC and GSA.

Transportation and Public Works Departments in Adjacent Jurisdictions

The District of Columbia lies at the center of a highly diverse region of over 5 million people. Many trips made by all modes of travel including cycling, cross-jurisdictional boundaries every day. The bicycle network should be seamless across these boundaries. Coordination regarding route location, treatments and signage are necessary. This will require ongoing communication with the local Departments of Transportation from adjacent jurisdictions including Arlington, Alexandria, Prince George's County and Montgomery County.